

David J. Tomassoni
State Senator
District 6



Senate

State of Minnesota

July 11, 2017

The Honorable Rick Nolan
U.S. House of Representatives
2366 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Via email: Will.Mitchell@mail.house.gov

Dear Congressman Nolan:

The bipartisan Iron Range Delegation is in support of H.R. 3115, the Superior National Forest Land Exchange Act of 2017, which is necessary to allow the Forest Service and PolyMet Mining to move forward with the NorthMet Land Exchange in an expedited manner. This land exchange has gone on long enough. The U.S. Forest Service determined in its Record of Decision back in January 2017 that the exchange best serves the public's interest.

Enactment of the bill will not authorize any mining to occur, but passage and a timely resolution of the exchange opens a crucial door for the prospect of a new generation of well-paying mining jobs in northeastern Minnesota.

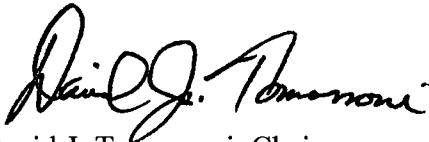
A comprehensive environmental review of the NorthMet Mining Project and Land Exchange under the National Environmental Policy Act and the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act was completed more than 18 months ago. The Final Environmental Impact Statement subsequently was validated by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources in March 2016 and by the U.S. Forest Service in its January 2017 final Record of Decision, and yet the land exchange still has not been finalized.



The exchange and the bill make sense when you consider the lands in question. Under H.R. 3115 and as outlined in the ROD, PolyMet would get 6,650 acres of Federal surface land where PolyMet owns and controls the underlying private minerals. The Federal land is largely landlocked by surrounding private lands and lacks road or other public overland access. In return, the United States would get 6,690 acres of non-Federal, private lands which will be protected and further the goals of the Superior National Forest Plan. These lands have higher public values than the Federal land for wetland conservation, lakes, wildlife and public recreational use.

We support you and your colleagues' efforts to bring swift closure and certainty to this process through Congressional action and strongly urge bipartisan support for and rapid passage of the enabling legislation through the U.S. Congress. Please let us know if we can be of any further assistance in moving this matter forward.

Sincerely,



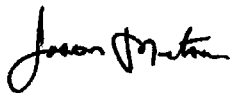
David J. Tomassoni, Chair
Iron Range Delegation



Thomas M. Bakk
State Senator



Justin Eichorn
State Senator



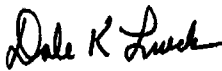
Jason Metsa
State Representative



Rob Ecklund
State Representative



Julie Sandstede
State Representative



Dale Lueck
State Representative



Sandy Layman
State Representative

DT:lb

cc: Senator Al Franken
Senator Amy Klobuchar